

# Education gap is costly to countries, report finds

■ Nations could improve conditions by ensuring better schooling for girls.

By David Briscoe  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington — Some 85 million more boys than girls receive elementary and secondary education worldwide, according to a report that says the gender gap in education leads to more babies, more disease and greater hardship.

The study, released Sunday by Population Action International, documents for the first time the

gap in 112 countries and estimates the cost of equalizing education.

"Educating girls is one of the best investments any country can make," said Joseph Speidel, president of PAI, which works for worldwide access to family planning and population stabilization.

Based on 1991 data, it says, \$6.5 billion annually could educate 76 million more girls to close the gap in countries where it is most serious.

The annual cost is estimated to triple over the next dozen years, but the report says it would be paid back in lower fertility rates, fewer infant deaths, better hygiene, reduced poverty and higher literacy.

"The educational status of women has a great deal to do with how many children they have and, therefore, population stability," said Shanti Conly, a population researcher who edited the study.

Prominent economists and social scientists have come to agree in recent years that educating women helps improve conditions in developing countries, especially

for rural people.

The study rates each country on a 100-point scale according to the educational attainment of women, female-male enrollment ratios and the percentage of females enrolled.

France and Canada, where women average more than 11 years of schooling, top the list, both with scores above 99.

At the bottom, scoring 21, is central Africa's Chad, where the average woman has less than a month of formal schooling and there is one girl in secondary school for every five boys.

The United States, with 95 girls for every 100 boys, ranks sixth,

following Finland, Norway and Belgium.

Among those near the top, rated "very good," are some less-wealthy countries, including Cuba and Mongolia. A few Asian, African and Middle Eastern countries are in the "good" category.

In China, the proverb "married daughter, spilt water" underscores traditional feelings that girls contribute little to a family. The world's most populous country rates "fair," with 86 females enrolled for every 100 males in primary schools and 73 per 100 in secondary grades.

The biggest gender gap in education is in India, where 33 mil-

lion girls would have to be enrolled to match each boy.

Among ways suggested to increase female enrollment: Hire more female teachers to overcome cultural taboos against having girls taught by men; build schools closer to rural communities to overcome reluctance to have girls travel long distances; and provide separate girls' schools in some countries.

Speidel said girls' education should be given a top priority worldwide, but more children of both sexes need to be educated.

Worldwide, 69 percent of the 1.28 billion children ages 6-17 are in school.

## SHIPSHAPE FOR SHIPPING OUT



Associated Press

A member of the Army's 317th Engineers laughs at a friend's joke, but it is no joke that his unit is leaving Somalia. On Sunday, the soldiers boarded the Mediterranean Sky ocean liner for a trip to Mombasa, Kenya. From there, the 219

soldiers will take commercial flights home. The ocean liner was the first ship in the largest seaborne evacuation of U.S. troops since the Vietnam War. All American troops in Somalia are scheduled to be evacuated this year.

## Shuttle to lift off on science trip with its 1st cosmonaut

By Marcia Dunn  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cape Canaveral, Fla. — The planet's two space superpowers already have exchanged handshakes and hugs, shared borscht and cranberry sauce, and toasted with apple juice — 140 miles above Earth.

This week, 19 years after the Apollo-Soyuz docking mission, five American astronauts and one Russian cosmonaut will pick up where their predecessors left off.

Sergei Krikalev will become the first Russian to fly on a U.S. space shuttle when Discovery lifts off Thursday on a science mission.

Unlike Apollo-Soyuz, which brought three Americans and two Russians together in orbit in 1975, astronauts and cosmonaut will occupy the same ship from launch through landing.

"This to me is a real landmark, not just because Sergei's on our flight, but because our two countries are working together," said Discovery astronaut Jan Davis.

Both countries say the mission is only the beginning of many joint space ventures.

### International station seen

The ultimate goal is an international space station, to be built using launch vehicles from both countries. Construction is scheduled to begin in 1997, and the station is expected to house permanent crews by 2001.

The two countries agreed on the joint station late last year. They

also agreed to 10 shuttle dockings with Russia's Mir space station, beginning in 1995.

The deal expanded on a 1992 agreement that arranged for Krikalev's flight and for an American astronaut to fly on Mir for three months in 1995.

Altogether, five American astronauts are to spend a combined 24 months on Mir. And another Russian cosmonaut — Vladimir Titov, Krikalev's backup for Discovery's mission — already is training for a shuttle flight early next year.

### Seen as good foreign policy

"What is most interesting part of this mission for me is flying on space shuttle itself," Krikalev said. "I have long period of time flying on Mir station. I flew on Soyuz vehicle. But this is new vehicle, new hardware, new experiments."

Marcia Smith, a specialist in space policy for the Congressional Research Service at the Library of Congress, said the cosmonaut and astronaut exchanges make for good foreign policy.

But she said it's risky to build a space station with the Russians, given that country's political and economic instability.

Krikalev has the crucial job of using Discovery's robot arm to retrieve a satellite deployed by the crew during the eight-day mission. The satellite, called the Wake Shield Facility, is being flown to see if it can create an ultravacuum for growing thin, pure semiconductor films.

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## Kevorkian kicks off petition drive in church

■ 'Dr. Death' pushes his proposal to put assisted suicide law on the Michigan ballot.

By Julia Prodis  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Livonia, Mich. — Standing like a preacher on a candlelit, flowery pulpit, Dr. Jack Kevorkian began a petition drive to legalize assisted suicide by urging about 700 churchgoers to join his crusade.

Kevorkian needs more than 250,000 signatures to place a constitutional amendment on the November ballot. In a speech between services Sunday at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, he spoke of the "right not to suffer" and blasted the "tyrants" who passed Michigan's law banning assisted suicide.

"It's almost an insult to put this on the ballot. It's an insult to human reason. Why? Because that right exists. We have to remind ourselves that right is there," said Kevorkian, who has been present at the deaths of 20 people since 1990.

The enthusiastic audience gave several standing ovations as Kevorkian, a 65-year-old retired pathologist, spoke in front of a tall crucifix and an open Bible.

"As a Christian, I think it's a disgrace that he stood in front of



Associated Press

**CHURCH CHAT:** Hundreds at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Livonia, Mich., waited in line to meet Dr. Jack Kevorkian (left).

the crucifix," Dave Reuschle of Plymouth said after the rally.

But others said Kevorkian's presence showed the church's open-mindedness. Kevorkian was invited to speak by Pastor Thomas Egglebeen, who said the belief of many Christians that suicide is a mortal sin is a fallacy borne of politics instead of theology.

"It's a hoax that's been hoisted upon us by the institutionalized church. It's just not true," Pastor Egglebeen said. "There are six or seven incidents in Scripture where a suicide is reported and it's treated kindly and tragically. In no way at all is the person condemned."

The Presbyterian Church has

taken no stand on the issue, he said. Archbishop Adam Maida of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit has spoken out against Kevorkian and assisted suicide.

After the rally, hundreds of people stood in line to shake Kevorkian's hand, get his autograph or have their picture taken with him. Kevorkian was flanked by two bodyguards.

Kevorkian has been charged four times with breaking the law enacted last year specifically to stop him. Three charges have been dismissed, including two last week when a judge overturned the law as unconstitutional on technical grounds.

Kevorkian is free on \$20,000 bond on the one remaining charge.

The national Hemlock Society and the grass-roots group Friends of Kevorkian have pledged to carry out the petition drive.

Meanwhile, a statewide telephone poll of 601 likely voters conducted by the Detroit Free Press found that 58 percent supported the concept of assisted suicide. Twenty-two percent believed it should be a crime. Sixteen percent said it is wrong but should not be criminalized. The rest were undecided in the survey conducted Jan. 9-13 by EPIC-MRA of Lansing.

The survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

## New research on Chernobyl alarming

Associated Press

Boston — A 1986 explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in Ukraine led to a complete core meltdown and far worse contamination than previously reported, says a Massachusetts Institute of Technology researcher who studied the reactor's ruins.

The released radioactivity was up to five times greater than previous estimates, nuclear engineer Alexander Sich said in a 500-page doctoral dissertation.

Soviet authorities claimed the initial explosion at the 1,000-megawatt Chernobyl 4 reactor led

only to a partial meltdown. They said helicopters were able to douse the blazing core by smothering it with 5,000 tons of sand, lead, boron and clay.

But Sich, who spent 18 months studying the ruined reactor, said the helicopters completely missed their target, according to the Boston Sunday Globe.

He said the core burned into the lowest levels of the plant basement before burning itself out.

The Chernobyl plant still contains 180 tons of partially burned nuclear fuel, according to Alexander Borovoi, the Russian scientist in charge of monitoring the site.

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